

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search Engine Optimization is a bit of a misnomer in that you're really not optimizing the search engines, but rather optimizing your Web site *for* search engines. Technically it should be Web Site Optimization For Search Engines; WSOFSE or WOSE. But SEO is the convention, and so it will remain.

In this document I have described some of the techniques you should employ in order to gain a higher standing among search results lists by the search engines.

Keywords as headings and text on your page

Use keywords that customers might use for searching your site in the paragraphs of text on your site. The more frequently you can include keywords that customers might search in the normal text of your Web site, the higher your site will be placed in the search listings.

Do **not** however, simply repeat keywords on your pages. Doing so might raise a flag of excessive keyword use. Instead, incorporate the keywords into complete thoughts and sentences.

Text as Image

If any keyword text is presented as an image it will not be seen by search engines. Be sure any keyword text that is in an image is also present as real text on the page. You may also want to put some of the keywords inside of header tags: as in <h1> and <h2>. These can be re-sized using the id tag and CSS. See example below.

Changing the attributes of an <h1> tag

```
<h1 id="tagname">...
```

CSS:

```
h1#tagname
{
    position: absolute;
    top: 112px;
    left: 220px;
    width: 390px;
    color: #0C0C7E;
    font-size: 8.5pt;
    font-family: Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
    font-style: italic;
}
```

Alt and Title tags

Add Alt and Title tags to all relevant images and links:

In addition to making Alt and Title tags meaningful for the visually impaired, take the opportunity to use them as marketing tools. Make statements related to the image or link that are informative and compelling.

Relevant Search Terms

You may want to include a list of search terms relevant to your site in smaller text at the bottom of your home page.

However, don't attempt to hide such lists by making the text the same color as the background, or etc, as such attempts are frowned upon and may even get your site blacklisted by the search organizations.

Header and Meta Tags

Title – This is critical. The keywords that users will likely use to search MUST be in here for good search ranking. If your business operates in specific localities (Cities, Counties, States, etc.) put these in the Title also. See [Head Title formatting](#) below.

Keywords – It is said Google doesn't use this. However, other search engines do and it doesn't hurt.

```
<meta name="description" content="<Describe your Web site>" />
```

Description – The description is used by Google in the search results below the title to describe the site.

```
<meta name="keywords" content="<your keywords>..." />
```

Robots.txt

Create a robots.txt file and specify your site preferences. This instructs search "robots" which parts of your site to include and which to exclude. It also tells the search robots where to find a sitemap in a format it can use (XML format). See Sitemap.xml below. To learn about robots.txt and how to use it, here are some suggested sites to get you going:

<http://www.robotstxt.org/>

<http://www.searchtools.com/robots/robots-txt.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robots_Exclusion_Standard

Sitemap.xml

You should create a sitemap.xml and point to it in a robots.txt file to assist search engines in mapping your site. If you are *great* with XML, you could create your own sitemap.xml document. For the rest of us however, there are many utilities to assist in this endeavor. Some are free and others are not. (You might Google: generate sitemap.xml or see <http://xmlsitemap.com/>) I prefer "A1 Sitemap Generator." (<http://www.microsystools.com/products/sitemap-generator/>) It is comprehensive and provides many additional features than just generation of a sitemap.xml file.

Google, Yahoo, and sitemaps

You need to tell Google and Yahoo about your sitemaps.

Go to Google sitemaps

<https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/>

If you don't already have an account, create one.

Once you have one, log in.

Dashboard

<http://www.google.com/addurl.html>

Also submit the sitemap by clicking on the "Submit a sitemap" link and following the instructions.

Yahoo: site explorer

<http://siteexplorer.search.yahoo.com/submit> Add website

<https://siteexplorer.search.yahoo.com/mysites> View sites you've set up

On completion, each of these search organizations will send you a meta tag to place into the header of your Web site. They will look something like...

```
<meta name="verify-v1" content="av#B1..." /> <!-- From Google -->  
<meta name="y_key" content="Xbl9@12Nn0..." /> <!-- From Yahoo -->
```

After you add the meta tags, go back to the respective search sites and authenticate.

Same thing with Bing

<http://www.bing.com/webmaster>

